



# ANNUAL REPORT

2025 - 2026 SCHOOL YEAR



SUSQUEHANNA  
WALDORF  
SCHOOL

# STAFF & BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Becky Rudowsky, Parent- Child and Stepping Stones Teacher  
Kathryn Pearce, Parent- Child Teacher  
Valerie Addy, Parent- Child Teacher  
Tabea Steinbeisser-Fitz, Stepping Stone Teacher  
Harmony Cecil, Stepping Stone Assistant & Sunset Lead  
Gabe Alberto, Stepping Stone Assistant & Sunset Assistant  
Jessie Whitaker, Buttercup Mixed-Age Kindergarten Teacher  
Nikisha Hill, Dandelion Mixed-Age Kindergarten Teacher  
Kerry Clements, Bluebell Mixed-Age Kindergarten Teacher  
Abby Tennis, Mixed-Age Kindergarten Assistant  
Kathleen Sensenig, Mixed-Age Kindergarten Assistant  
Anne Beachy, Mixed-Age Kindergarten Assistant  
Katie Willems, Class One Teacher  
Ruby Hartley, Class Two Teacher  
Alyssa Bolinder, Class Three Teacher  
Holly Galvez, Class Four Teacher and Spanish Teacher  
Michele Calabretta, Class Five Teacher  
Mandela Davis, Class Six Teacher  
Melissa McIntyre, Class Seven Teacher  
Rochelle Dietz, Class Eight Teacher  
Hui-Ling Singer, Mandarin Teacher  
Lisa Sweeney, Latin Teacher  
Harley Ludy, Orchestra Teacher  
Nina Radanovic, Music & Chorus Teacher  
Tina Quintana, Handwork & Practical Arts Teacher  
Katie O'Brien, Eurythmy Teacher  
Krista Bieniek, Pedagogical & Admin Chair & Resource Coordinator  
Erica Ware, School Counselor  
Mari Satterlee, Math Support Specialist  
Deborah Duke, Business Manager  
Liz Reid Pargament, Admissions Director  
Linny Snyder, Administrative Coordinator  
Courtney Kokus, Marketing & Development Director  
Najin Lee, Communications & Events Coordinator  
Cait Clayton, Social Media Coordinator

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Dave Knapp, Board President  
Lilia Nice, Board Vice President  
Erin Darby, Board Secretary  
Nathan Krotzer, Board Treasurer  
Nina Radanovic, Faculty Representative  
Melissa McIntyre, Leadership Council Representative  
Deborah Duke, Business Manager  
April Hennesey, Parent Guild Representative  
Marty Thomas-Brumme, Member at Large  
Marisa Dominguez, Member at Large  
Pete Richards, Member at Large



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

- Mission & Vision 3
- Letter from the Board 4
- Treasurer's Report 5
- Financial Outlook 6
- Strategic Plan 7
- Marketing & Admissions 8
- ExtraGive 9
- EITC 10
- Programming & Student Support 12
- Parent Guild 13
- DEI 14





# MISSION

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The Susquehanna Waldorf School inspires resilience and compassion in our students, awakens their capacities for innovative learning, and prepares them to engage with purpose in the world.



# VISION

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We envision a community where children love to learn and are inspired to live with purpose, compassion, and joy.



# LETTER FROM THE BOARD

Dear Susquehanna Waldorf School Community,

As I reflect on the past year, I am filled with cherished memories of our introduction to the Susquehanna Waldorf School. One that stands out is our open house, where our shy little boy was welcomed by two teachers with such warmth and care. Their love and encouragement invited him into a magical world of creative, play-based education—so vital at that tender age.

Another memorable touchstone was the mid-year report from his Early Childhood teacher. Even now, it brings tears of joy. In just four months, she captured the essence of who our child was, understanding his temperament and nurturing him in exactly the ways he needed. Both of our boys benefited deeply from those early foundations, which allowed them to transition smoothly through the grades with consistent love and support.

Those foundations continue to carry them forward, from Susquehanna Waldorf School to high school, college, and now into adulthood. While their journeys, like all adolescents, held challenges, what stands out most is their growth into fulfilled individuals building meaningful lives of their own. Their education fostered not only academic readiness, but a lifelong love of learning and enduring values—integrity, respect, and trust—that guide how they engage with the world.

I am deeply grateful to the extraordinary individuals who bring our school to life: our alumni community of graduates, parents, grandparents, and friends, the dedicated Parent Guild, my fellow Board members, and most especially our teachers and administrative staff, whose guidance and care extend to students and one another, nurturing a truly supportive community.

As Board President, I have the privilege of seeing the school from a broader perspective. With a strong organizational foundation, clear strategic goals, and a vibrant community, I am confident we are poised for sustained growth. Our path forward includes strengthening educational excellence while building financial stability through a target surplus budget for the 2026–27 school year. Together, I believe we will achieve these goals.

**DAVE KNAPP**

**Board President**



# TREASURER'S REPORT

**NATHAN**  
Board Treasurer

Budgets—everyone's favorite topic.

In last year's annual report, I posed a question: "On the continuum of survival–stability–success–significance, where are we, and where are we heading?" Through vigilant stewardship and focused Development efforts, we continue to move steadily along our stability trajectory.

Like many independent schools, Susquehanna Waldorf continues to feel the lingering effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, including enrollment losses and increased financial pressure on families. What has changed is how we are responding.

Hope is no longer our strategy.

As we entered this fiscal year, the Budget and Finance Committee adopted a clear philosophy: be rigorously realistic. Our planning is grounded in facts, historical data, and executable plans.

Leading into the school year, attrition rose above the prior year. While Admissions efforts helped recover some of that loss, particularly in early childhood, the most significant shift in our outlook came from a renewed focus on Development revenue.

Working closely with our Development Director and the Development Committee, we presented a realistic outlook and asked for a concrete strategy to improve results. They delivered—exceptionally. As of this report, we are projecting approximately \$46,000 in development income above budget. Most notably, participation in the EITC program among current families more than doubled, generating \$230,500 compared to the \$200,000 budgeted.

Even with these gains, we are projecting an operating deficit of approximately \$35,000. While this is not where we aim to land, there is strong reason for confidence moving forward:

- We experienced a breakout year in Development—one we believe is both repeatable and scalable.
- Admissions momentum is building, with the highest Kindergarten enrollment in five years and one of the strongest Class 1 class sizes in recent memory.
- Our core community is strengthening, reflected in outstanding EITC and Extra Give results and recognition as the #1 Private School in Lancaster County.

A sustainable school is most reliably achieved through strong enrollment, where even small shifts can make a meaningful difference. Enrollment growth depends on welcoming new families and retaining those already here. Share this beautiful school with families beyond our community, and if you notice a family still finding their place, invite them in.

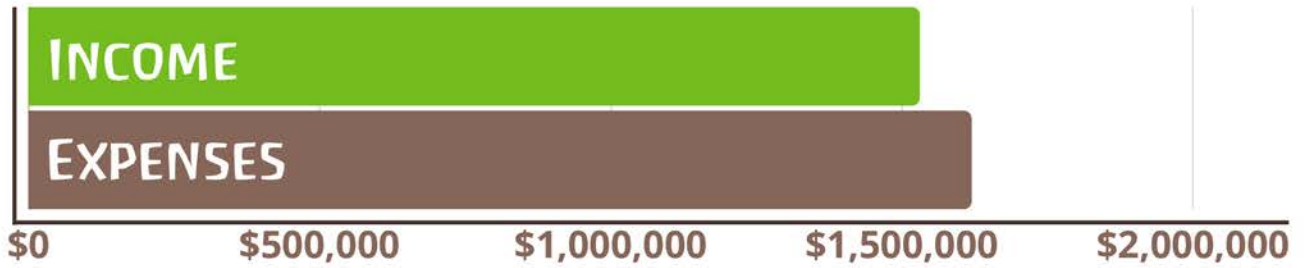
Every family at Susquehanna Waldorf School chose this community because they believed it was the best place for their children—and together, we make that belief a reality.

Thank you for your continued trust, commitment, and care for this school.

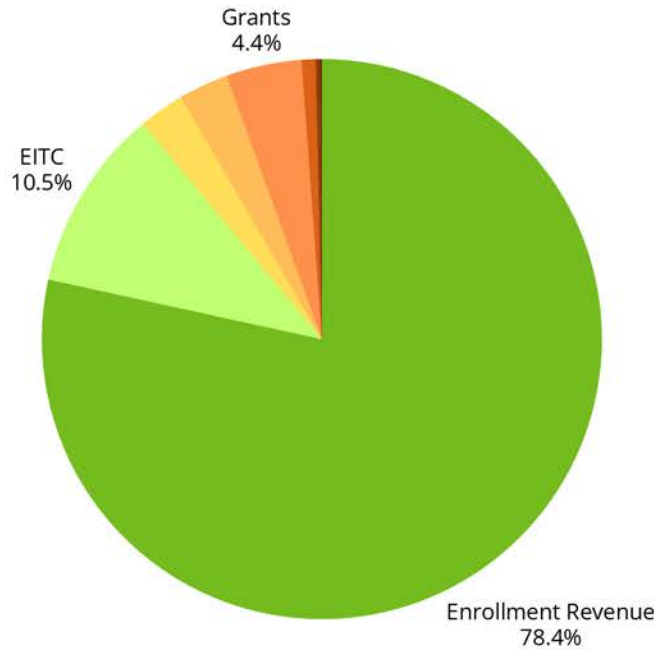


# FINANCIAL OUTLOOK

2025 / 2026

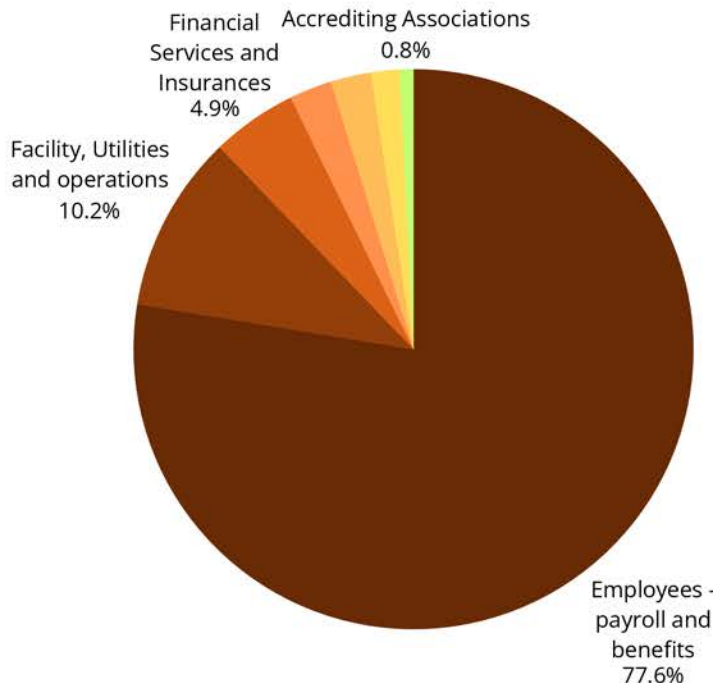


## — INCOME —



- ENROLLMENT REVENUE  
78.43%
- EITC  
10.54%
- ANNUAL GIVING & EXTRAGIVE  
2.63%
- AUCTION  
2.89%
- GIFTS/GRANTS  
4.36%
- WINTER FAIR  
0.80%
- MERCH / RETAIL / MISC.  
0.25%
- ENDOWMENT  
0.11%

## — EXPENSES —



- PAYROLL & BENEFITS  
74.39%
- FACILITY, UTILITIES & OPERATIONS  
9.82%
- FINANCIAL SERVICES & INSURANCES  
4.74%
- DEVELOPMENT  
2.36%
- SUPPLIES - CLASSROOM  
2.23%
- ADMISSIONS & MARKETING  
1.59%
- ACCREDITING ASSOCIATIONS  
0.75%

# STRATEGIC PLAN

## A Commitment to Continuous Institutional Growth and Improvement

Each year, our Strategic Priorities are reset based on progress in our Three-Year Plan and the evolving needs of our community. These priorities are set by the Board with community input and are reflected in both the budget and annual work plans. As we begin our in-depth review of the 2025–26 school year, we are pleased to share several highlights.

As in the previous year, the Board identified three Strategic Priorities for 2025–26:

### **Increase revenue to support the cost of educating all students.**

We have made strong progress toward our goals, including growth in donor participation, EITC involvement, grant funding, matching donors for the Giving Campaign, and a successful Winter Faire. We look ahead with excitement to the Annual Auction and Dinner in March and continue to prioritize expanding business participation in EITC. Please see this year's Finance Report for more details. These achievements reflect sustained focus and collaboration.

### **Increase enrollment by recruiting new families and retaining current ones.**

According to surveys and reports from PAIS and AWSNA, enrollment challenges are being felt by independent schools nationwide. Our outreach emphasizes the value of a screen-free education and our “Head, Heart, and Hands” approach. Most new families learn about SWS through personal connections, and we encourage our community to invite friends to school events.

This year, SWS also implemented a reading and math support program for students who learn differently. The program has exceeded expectations and reflects our commitment to meeting children where they are, an essential element of Waldorf education.

### **Review and update the governance model, policies, and procedures.**

SWS is the only fully accredited Waldorf school in Central Pennsylvania, accredited by both AWSNA and PAIS. Maintaining accreditation requires ongoing evaluation of not only our academic program, but also our governance and operational practices. We are currently engaged in this continuous improvement process with both accrediting bodies. Finally, SWS is in the third year of its current Three-Year Plan and will begin creating the next one. Together, we will consider questions about growth, sustainability, enrollment, and how best to serve our students in the years ahead. The entire community will be invited to participate. Your voice and vision are essential as we shape the future of our school.



**LILIA NICE**  
Board Vice President

SCAN QR CODE TO  
SEE FULL  
STRATEGIC REPORT



# BEST SCHOOL IN LANCASTER!



**COURTNEY KOKUS**

Marketing & Development Director



**LIZ PARGAMENT**

Admissions Director

The 2025–26 school year marked a defining moment for Susquehanna Waldorf School. One of our most significant achievements was being named **Best Private School in Lancaster County**, a powerful affirmation of our mission, our educational model, and the strength of our community. This recognition reflects not only effective marketing but also the authentic experiences of families who believe deeply in Waldorf education and proudly share their stories.

Throughout the year, our marketing and admissions efforts focused on visibility, connection, and trust. Strategic digital advertising, strengthened SEO, targeted print placements, and high-impact community events expanded our reach across the county. Open Houses, school tours, and community partnerships consistently converted interest into enrollment, while a clear message around whole-child education and intentional technology use resonated strongly with prospective families.

At the heart of our success remains word of mouth. Engaged parents, inspired alumni families, and dedicated faculty continue to be our greatest ambassadors. Their voices, now amplified by county-wide recognition, have helped position SWS as a leading choice for families seeking a thoughtful, rigorous, and human-centered education.

As we look ahead, we remain focused on sustaining enrollment growth, strengthening our brand, and deepening community engagement. Being named Best Private School is both a milestone and a responsibility, one we are proud to carry forward with purpose and gratitude.



# EXTRAGIVE 2025

COURTNEY KOKUS

Marketing & Development Director

ExtraGive has become a cherished annual tradition at Susquehanna Waldorf School, an impactful day that launches our fundraising year while celebrating the strength, generosity, and shared purpose of our community. Each November, our school by the river is lifted up by families, alumni, grandparents, faculty, staff, board members, and friends who believe deeply in Waldorf education and in the children we serve.

**ExtraGive 2025 was our most successful ExtraGive to date!** Together, our community raised an incredible **\$43,375**, marking a significant milestone in the school's growth and sustainability. This success reflects not only generosity, but momentum: we saw a **13% increase in unique donors**, and an incredible **35% increase in total donations**.

Every gift, large and small, directly supports our students and the programs that nurture their academic, social, and creative development. These contributions help ensure that Susquehanna Waldorf School remains a place where children are encouraged to grow with purpose, joy, imagination, and care. While our school may be small in size, the reach of our community's commitment continues to grow in meaningful and inspiring ways.

We extend heartfelt gratitude to our matching donors, whose leadership and generosity amplified every contribution and helped propel this day to new heights:

Mike & Rhonda Rhoads, Sandra Gibson, David & Barbara Freiberg, Paige & Garret Kline, Ellen Hall, Alice Meckley, Sharon & Michael Myers, Devon & Jason Kolomick, and an Anonymous Supporter.

We are also deeply thankful to our prize donors, whose creativity and enthusiasm added joy and connection throughout the day:

Lilia Nice, Liz Pargament, Lauren Lutz, Kerry Clements, the Parent Guild, Courtney Kokus, and Najin Lee.

ExtraGive 2025 was more than a fundraiser; it was a celebration of community, shared belief, and collective impact. Thank you to everyone who helped make this extraordinary day possible and who continues to invest in the future of Susquehanna Waldorf School.



# EITC

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**This year's Education Improvement Tax Credit (EITC) program marks one of the most significant milestones in recent history for Susquehanna Waldorf School.** What began as a strategic focus area has blossomed into a powerful engine of financial sustainability, thanks to the generosity, advocacy, and commitment of our community.

Together, we raised an incredible **\$230,500 - 115% of our goal**, far exceeding expectations. Even more inspiring, we saw a **77% increase in EITC donors** and a **16% increase in total EITC donations**, demonstrating both new engagement and deepening commitment from existing supporters. With **27% of our school community participating**, we surpassed our ambitious goal of 25%, a clear reflection of shared belief in our mission and future.

For those unfamiliar, EITC allows individuals and businesses to redirect their Pennsylvania state tax dollars to support tuition assistance and educational excellence at our school, receiving 90% back as tax credits. These funds are transformative. They expand access to Waldorf education, support our students and families, and free up vital resources to strengthen our programs and faculty.

This year's success is a testament to the leadership and dedication of our Development Committee, Board, and advocates across our community. Another contributor to this momentum has been our partnership with RedefinED, in collaboration with BLOCS LLC, which has made participation more accessible than ever, opening the door for smaller businesses and first-time donors to join this impactful program.

We are deeply grateful to every donor, ambassador, and supporter who helped make this year possible. The success of EITC affirms what we know to be true: when our community comes together with purpose and generosity, the impact is profound. This year, we didn't just meet a goal, we built momentum that will carry us forward for years to come. Thank you for believing in our students, our teachers, and the future of Susquehanna Waldorf School.

**COURTNEY KOKUS**

**Marketing & Development Director**



# THANK YOU TO OUR EXTRAGIVE AND EITC DONORS!

Ak Family  
Albanese Family  
Anderson Family  
Barrett Family  
Beebe Family  
Beegle Family  
Bieniek Family  
Bittle Family  
Bolinder Family  
Brubaker Family  
Calabretta Family  
Capital Blue Cross  
Cantey Family  
Castoldi Family  
Clark Family  
Clayton Family  
Clements Family  
Coffman Family  
Co Family  
Cooley Family  
Contreras Family  
Contreras Lopez Family  
Copeland Family  
Corradino Family  
Coyne Family  
Dalbec Family  
Dalton Family  
Darby Family  
Davis Family  
Dawson Family  
DeShong Family  
Dickson Family  
DiCioccio Family  
Dietz Family  
Donegal Insurance  
Dominguez Family  
Dolphin Family  
Duke Family  
Eckert Family  
Electric Family  
Enbashi Family  
Espenshade Family

Eshenour Family  
Farbo Family  
Feiler Family  
Franklin Family  
Freiberg Family  
Friedrich Family  
Fritz Family  
Frailey Family  
Frye Family  
Fuller Family  
Galvez Family  
Gibson Family  
Getz Family  
Gilleland Family  
Grimes Family  
Gruno Family  
Guttau Family  
Hall Family  
Hammond Family  
Hankins Family  
Hansen Family  
Hartzell Family  
Hasircoglu Family  
Hauling Family  
Hegney Family  
Heinzel Family  
Hennessey Family  
Heysek Family  
Hoffer Family  
Hoover Family  
Hubbard Family  
Jens Family  
Jensen Family  
Kerr Family  
King Family  
Kline Family  
Knapp Family  
Kolomick Family  
Kokus Family  
Koppenhaver Family  
Kramer Family  
Kreider Family

Kreiser Family  
Krotzer Family  
Kuchinski Family  
L.C. Family  
Lee Family  
Leigh Family  
Lewis Family  
Livingston Family  
Livingston/Loucks Family  
Lo Family  
Loucks Family  
Loudermilk Family  
Lutz Family  
Mauro Family  
McGrew Family  
McIntyre Family  
Meckley Family  
Meyer Family  
Meyers Family  
Michi Family  
Mongeau Family  
Mosher Family  
Mulle Family  
Murray Family  
Myers Family  
Neville Family  
Nguyen Family  
Nice Family  
Nex Tier Bank  
Nieto Family  
Ortiz Family  
Pargament Family  
Pearce Family  
Pecora Family  
LR Photography  
Pierdon Family  
Pitman Family  
Pollock Family  
Puffs Family  
Radanovic Family  
Randazzo Family  
Rank Family

Radysch Family  
John Wright Restaurant  
Richards Family  
Richardson Family  
Rhoads Family  
Rudowsky Family  
Ruggley Family  
Sassaman Family  
Satterlee Family  
Sattler Family  
Schaefer Family  
Shaub Family  
Shive Family  
Sidler Family  
Singer Family  
Slaugh Family  
Smith Family  
Snyder Family  
Somers Family  
Spagnola Family  
Steinbeisser-Fitz Family  
Stoner Family  
Sweeney Family  
Tennis Family  
Thomas-Brumme Family  
Traditions Bank (ACNB)  
Truist Bank  
Ulrich Family  
Updike Family  
Walker Family  
Walsh Family  
Walter Family  
Kingston Family  
Warman Family  
Wert Family  
Whitaker Family  
Will Family  
Willems Family  
Wilmoth Family  
Wingard Family  
Yeager Family  
Yeast Family

# PROGRAMS & STUDENT SUPPORT

**KRISTA BIENIEK**

**Pedagogical Chair & Resource Coordinator**



The remarkable faculty and staff at SWS have continued to offer vibrant, engaging educational programming that reflects our deep commitment to a child-centered and developmentally aligned education. Guided by this mission, we have continued expanding our programming and student services in an effort to more fully support all the children and families at SWS.



Our Early Childhood program continues to thrive with healthy enrollment across all three Kindergartens and both Stepping Stones classes. To welcome more families into our community and support the earliest stages of child development, we have expanded our Parent Child offerings, with sessions now available on Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays throughout the school year.

In the Grades, we are excited to have formed a partnership with Lancaster Reading Solutions to provide Reading Enrichment programming for our Lower Grades students. Looking ahead, we are piloting a Middle School Book Club, with the intention of expanding literacy support resources across all Grades.



Our Social-Emotional Learning curriculum has continued to develop under the guidance of our school counselor, Mrs. Ware. She has been offering lessons in relationship skill development, conflict resolution, and resilience to all grades classes, while also supporting the SWS Care Group as a bridge to resources for students and families.

In addition to the meaningful work happening in our classrooms, seasonal festivals and events have continued as beloved moments of community. Gathering together to mark the rhythms of the year and co-create seasonal celebrations has continued to deepen relationships among students, families, faculty, and staff. It has been a delight to witness the sense of belonging and warmth that these moments cultivate.

As we move into the future, we do so with hope and heartfelt gratitude for all the students and families in our community:

*Blessings on our school, and each other, and the children in our care.*

# PARENT GUILD

**BETHANY KROTZER & HALEY SPAGNOLA**

**Parent Guild Chairs**

Parent Guild continues to grow and deepen its meaningful work. This year, we have two main goals: fostering community and fundraising.

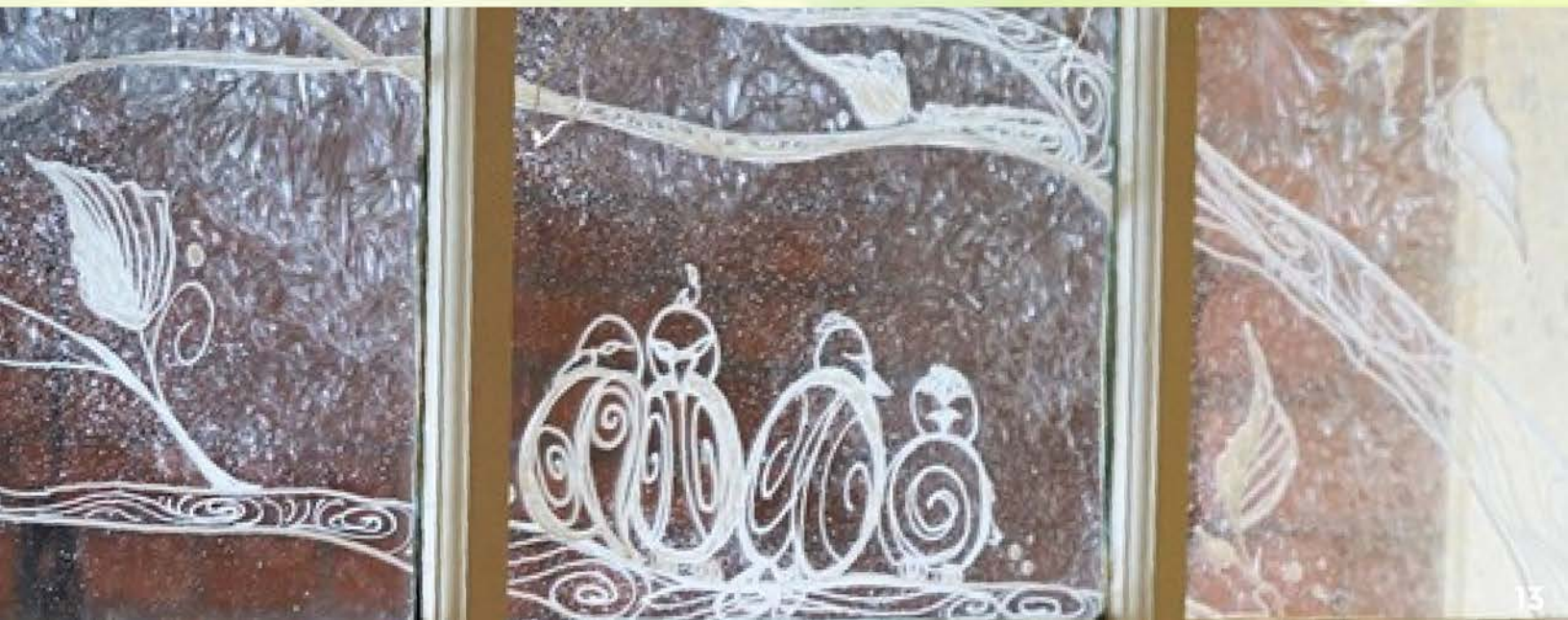
We developed several community-building activities to begin the year. "Crafting and Community" builds togetherness and teaches new handwork skills, some of which include needle felting, wet felting, and embroidery. In the first half of the year, we engaged in a book club, featuring "Anxious Generation" by Jonathan Haidt. We discussed technology's impact on society, including development, play, and community. Fitness Fridays help to encourage physical activity as a group.

In our first PG fundraiser, we sold coffee from Essex Coffee, a company owned by an SWS parent. We plan to use funds to supplement PG meetings and community events by buying craft supplies, teacher gifts, and festival supplies.

Our monthly PG meetings flourish with consistent attendance both in person and virtual. At each meeting, a member of the Leadership Council presents a study. We also had the chance for Emily, the Eurythmy intern, to share an Eurythmy lesson! We engage in a craft together at our meeting and have donated our projects to Winter Faire and as a prize for ExtraGive.

Winter Faire was so magical this year! Through the commitment of parent volunteers, we had a variety of activities and events. Now we prepare for the Spring Auction, "Gather and Bloom." We are excited to return to the same venue and help to host another magical evening in support of our school.

Looking ahead, we have many plans in the works, including another Clothing Share, implementing a monthly service project, and the return of a Spring Faire. We are looking forward to finishing our school year together, building on the community we have established, and continuing to encourage parental participation and support for our families.



# DEI

## COURTNEY KOKUS

### DEI Committee Member

This year, the work of the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Committee has focused on deepening our practices and moving thoughtfully from exploration into implementation. Guided by our school's mission and values, we continue to ask how inclusion, equity, and belonging can be meaningfully reflected in our curriculum, school culture, and community relationships.

A central area of focus this year has been the ongoing review and diversification of curriculum stories and seasonal celebrations. Using the Alma Partners Curriculum Map as a guiding framework, the committee is examining how stories, festivals, and language can better reflect a wider range of cultures while remaining developmentally appropriate and pedagogically aligned with Waldorf education. This work includes thoughtful conversations around how we present religious language, seasonal imagery, and cultural traditions in ways that are authentic, inclusive, and clearly communicated to families.

In addition to curriculum work, the committee has continued to strengthen equity in access and opportunity. Efforts this year include advancing plans for a Refugee Scholarship and exploring community partnerships that support families navigating displacement and resettlement. These initiatives reflect our commitment to ensuring that Susquehanna Waldorf School remains accessible and welcoming to families from diverse backgrounds.

Community engagement has also remained an important part of our work. Events such as the DEI Heritage Potluck, participation in local Pride celebrations, and the recognition of cultural celebrations throughout the year offer opportunities for connection, learning, and shared reflection. Internally, the committee continues to hold space for longer-term initiatives, including conversations around land acknowledgment, financial aid processes, and future DEI audits, recognizing that meaningful change requires both patience and sustained effort.

As we look ahead, we remain committed to continued collaboration with faculty, administration, and families to ensure that DEI work is not only thoughtfully planned, but lived out in daily practice. We are grateful for the ongoing engagement of our community and look forward to continuing this important work together.



# BLESSINGS ON OUR SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY!



SUSQUEHANNA  
**WALDORF**  
SCHOOL